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SUPPOSE THE GOOD SAMARITAN HAD ARRIVED EARLIER

It is not always safe to build hypotheses around a parable, but at least it is as legitimate as are some interpretations to which the parables have been subjected. Therefore we raise the question: Suppose the Good Samaritan had arrived while the robbers were attacking their victim. What should he have done to merit the approval of Jesus?



In the first place he might have done nothing. His interest might have been highly scientific. He might have watched the technique of the robbers, the way in which they stripped their victim, the way in which they disappeared. If he had been thoroughly modern he might then have made a study of their thumb marks so as to be able to identify the perpetrators of similar robberies in the future. Then after he had taken the necessary notes he might have cared for the wounded.

Can anyone hold that this would be an application of the principle of neighborliness? Would scientific interest in robbery justify a refusal to defend the robbed?



In the second place the Good Samaritan, when he came upon the traveler struggling with the robbers, might have said to himself, "Here is a providential opportunity to recoup myself from various losses in business." And so he might have taken the traveler's baggage and the robbers' baggage and gone on his way to Jericho.

Would Jesus have told the lawyer to go and do likewise?
Does the question seem silly?

What about the efforts of neutral powers to seize the foreign commerce of warring nations?



Or, in the third place, the Good Samaritan might have said, "This is certainly a sad occasion, but my obligation as a Good Samaritan is one of amelioration. I will therefore find a shady place where I may wait until the robbers finish their work, and then I shall be ready to care for the wounded and perform the other duties which are expected of Good Samaritans."

Can any sane man think that Jesus would have advised such conduct? Would not the very principle of love and desire to help a man in sorrow, the very spirit of Calvary itself, have induced this man to help the unfortunate traveler defend himself?

Love is not to be limited to Red Cross service.



Such sacrificial social-mindedness as the Good Samaritan might have exhibited is no more militarist than selfish.

Just how far we should interfere in other people's quarrels, how far we should use our resources to protect the defenseless, how far we should undertake to erect proper social defenses which would make good Samaritans unnecessary, must be left to the wisdom which our trained experts may show us.

But no man is a Christian who believes that anything injurious is right. No man has the spirit of Christ who is content to permit wrong to live quietly.

Personal comfort, life itself, is as nothing compared with the giving of justice for which Jesus himself died. That is a heroism quite other than that of the soldier who seeks to aid a good cause by injuring its enemies.

Let those who would have the full mind of Christ and be dominated by his inmost principle rededicate themselves to the effort to check forces working injury, even at personal expense.

Social service is the duty of Good Samaritans. Jesus promises social regeneration, even though it be at the cost of one's own perquisites, privilege, and person.